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ABSTRACT

This model social studies lesson includes a simulated interview with a relief worker describing the famine conditions in Ethiopia. A map of Africa and pictures of famine victims are included. The objectives of the lesson are to have students describe the situation in Ethiopia, analyze the causes, and evaluate solutions to the famine. In the model English lesson, students explore how figurative language helps convey a feeling of despair and how to relate the poem, "Oda Oak Oracle," to the current Ethiopian famine. A series of questions designed to explore the effects of hunger and a detailed outline of lesson development are included. (SM)

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World Hunger: *Famine in Africa*

Sample Lessons
Secondary

December, 1984

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Children for Children Campaign

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SAMPLE SOCIAL STUDIES LESSON

This lesson was developed by the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Charlotte Frank, Executive Director, through the Office of Curriculum Development and Support, Morris Freedman, Director. The lesson was written by Eileen Neeson of the Social Studies Unit, under the supervision of Elliot Salow, Director of Social Studies.

AIM: Can we eliminate hunger in Africa?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES Students will be able to:

. Describe conditions of famine in Ethiopia today.
. Analyze the causes of the famine.
. Evaluate solutions to the problem of famine.

MOTIVATION

What do you see in the photographs? What do the photographs tell us about conditions in Ethiopia today? How do these pictures make you feel? What do you think can be done about these conditions? Do you think any of your proposed solutions will be successful? What important question does our discussion raise? (Can we eliminate hunger in Ethiopia?)

PIVOTAL QUESTIONS

1. Read the interview on the worksheet and then examine the map.

   - Based on this interview, how would you describe the situation in Ethiopia today?

   - What does the map tell us about the extent of the famine?

   - How critical do you think the situation is?

2. How does the relief worker interviewed here explain the causes of the famine?

   - To what degree do you think the Ethiopian government is to blame for the famine? To what degree are other nations to blame?

MEDIAL SUMMARY

Of all the causes of famine in Ethiopia mentioned in the interview, which do you think is the most important? The least important? Use the following scale to rank the causes:

3. If you were an Ethiopian government official charged with solving the problem of the famine, what are some possible actions you could take?

   - What would be the consequences of each possible famine solution?

   - In your opinion, which of these possible solutions to the problem of famine in Ethiopia is best?

FINAL SUMMARY

Can hunger be eliminated in Africa?

APPLICATION

How can you explain that millions of people go hungry everyday in a rich country like the United States? What obligation do those of us who are not hungry have to feed the others?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

As a follow-up to the lesson, students might complete any one of the following activities: write a letter to their local elected official expressing their opinions on the Ethiopian famine; draw an editorial cartoon about the situation in Ethiopia and submit it to their school newspaper; write a letter to the editor of their school newspaper proposing what students might do to help solve the problem of the famine.

SCENES FROM AN ETHIOPIAN REFUGEE CAMP

A starving young girl bends under the weight of her sorrows.

A child huddles against the cc

Child kept warm and fed through relief efforts.

A woman in Bati comforts her starving child.

WORKSHEET

HUNGER IN ETHIOPIA

TO THE STUDENT: Ethiopia is one of many African nations where people are starving today. (See the accompanying map.) Both foreign governments and non-governmental relief organizations are trying to relieve the suffering of people in Ethiopia. If an interview were held with a relief worker in Ethiopia, it might be reported as follows:

INTERVIEWER: What is taking place in Ethiopia right now?

RELIEF WORKER: In Ethiopia, a vast drought affecting millions of people in the countryside has led to famine. The famine has killed at least 300,000 people. A million more may die before the disaster is over.

When we opened a relief station three weeks ago in Bati, a remote township in northern Ethiopia, the local population swelled from 3,000 to 15,000 -- all of them hungry. Today the population is 25,000 and they're still coming.

Only the relatively fit make it to Bati. One woman I met left home with her four children after her husband died. Three of the children died on the road. The day after she arrived the last child died. This is not unusual in Bati. Last Friday I drove from Bati to Addis. Starving children were lying on the road to stop food trucks. It took me five hours to travel 28 miles.

INTERVIEWER: What other factors, besides drought, are to blame for the famine?

RELIEF WORKER: The immediate cause of Africa's famine is the drought. But in the nearly 30 affected countries, other factors -- poverty, booming populations, abuse of the land, civil war and official mismanagement -- have compounded the ravages of nature.

Africa below the Sahara is the world's poorest area, and it is the only region in which the population is growing faster than the food supply. Agriculture in this region never fully recovered from the devastating drought of a decade ago. In 1982, there was much less food per person in Ethiopia than there was in 1971.

Under increasing pressure for food production, the soil has been overused, and, as a result, worn out. Most farmers have no chemical fertilizers, and the animal dung they once used to enrich the soil is now being burned for fuel. That is because

RELIEF WORKER (continues): so many trees have been cut down. Only 20 years ago, 16% of Ethiopia's land area was covered by forest; today the figure is just 3.1%. With deforestation, the soil loses much of its capacity to retain moisture and consequently its productivity and resistance to drought.

INTERVIEWER: You stated that civil war and official mismanagement also made the effects of the drought in Africa worse. How do these factors relate to the Ethiopian famine?

RELIEF WORKER: Undoubtedly, the Ethiopian civil war, which has raged for several years, has interfered with growing food. Some people contend that the civil war has also hampered food relief to the rebellious provinces. The Marxist Ethiopian government, they say, has prevented food from being delivered to those provinces. Instead, they claim that food has been used to feed government troops. Ethiopian officials deny these charges.

As for "official mismanagement," critics of Ethiopia's government charge that the regime has spent more money on guns to fight its rebellious peoples than on growing food. These same critics also point to the $200 million party which the government threw in August to celebrate the tenth anniversary of its rule as an example of fiscal mismanagement.

INTERVIEWER: Why has the Ethiopian government blamed the United States and other Western nations for the famine?

RELIEF WORKER: Ethiopian officials have accused Western nations of knowing some time ago about worsening conditions in Ethiopia, but doing too little too late to help. Some officials believe that Ethiopia's status as a Soviet ally delayed United States relief efforts. The United States government denies this charge. Top U.S. officials say that only after the tenth anniversary celebration did the Ethiopian government allow foreign journalists to visit areas that, by then, were blighted by famine.

INTERVIEWER: Are there any signs of hope for Ethiopia?

RELIEF WORKER: Although the situation in Ethiopia is quite bad, encouraging developments are occurring. For example, more of the food sent to Ethiopia by foreign countries is getting through to the needy. The country's main port, where supplies were logjammed last month, has begun processing shipments at ten times its normal capacity. The amount of food being shipped to Ethiopia from countries all over the world has encouraged us greatly. Still, even if all of Ethiopia's food needs were met, it seems unlikely that more than 20% of those in the grip of famine could be reached before they die. We can only hope for a miracle!

RELIEF WORKER: (continues) Secondly, Africans themselves are beginning to address the fundamental causes of the problem. In northern Ethiopia, for example, one of the problems is soil erosion. To stop the destruction of their soil the people are now putting ridges in the sides of hills. There seems to be strong motivation in people who are displaced within the country to do something to help themselves -- to fix a road or to improve an irrigation system.

My greatest hope is that this terrible famine will inspire a new partnership between Africa and the industrialized world -- one that can mobilize the resources needed to end hunger there forever.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
INCLUDES CAPE VERDE, COMOROS, MAURITIUS, SÃO TOMÉ AND PRINCIPE, SEYCHELLES

COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING ABNORMAL FOOD SHORTAGES
ACCORDING TO A JULY 1984 REPORT FROM FAO. INCLUDES CAPE VERDE, SAÕ TOME AND PRINCIPE

SAMPLE ENGLISH LESSON

This lesson was developed as a project of the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Charlotte Frank, Executive Director, through the Office of Curriculum Development and Support, Morris Freedman, Director. The lesson was prepared by Barbara Gurr, Assistant Principal-English and Barbara Jacobson, teacher of Grover Cleveland High School. Review, revisions and additional activities were contributed by Jane Gardner and Edith Novod under the supervision of Steven Tribus, Director of Communication Arts.

AIM: Why can prolonged hunger make a person feel lonely and abandoned?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES Students will be able to:

. explain how figurative language helps convey a feeling of despair
. relate the poem, "Oda Oak Oracle," to the current famine in Ethiopia

MOTIVATION

. Ask questions such as the following to elicit an exploration of the effects of hunger.

  - Have you ever been hungry? Have you ever fasted? For how long? How does it feel to be hungry for three hours? One day? Longer?

  - What happens to a person physically after prolonged hunger?

  - What happens to a person emotionally?

. Distribute copies of the picture.

  - What do you think the child in this picture is feeling?

. Discuss various feelings, e.g., physical pain, sickness, loneliness, abandonment, despair.

DEVELOPMENT

. Distribute copies of the poem, "Oda Oak Oracle."

. Read the poem to the class twice.

  - Listen for images in this poem which remind you of the picture.

. Instruct the students to look at lines five through eight.

  - Why would ripe fruit fail to make the bird aware of its existence?

  - How can food be available and a hungry person not be able to reach it?

. Instruct the students to look at lines nine through sixteen. Elicit the connection between physical pain and feelings of despair.

. Instruct the students to look at lines seventeen through twenty-one. Elicit the reason for the mule's activity based upon the imagery presented. Relate the activity to feelings of hunger.

. Ask the students to re-examine the poem and identify the various ways in which loneliness is described (through metaphor).

- How does the use of figurative language evoke feelings associated with hunger as well as with loneliness?

- In light of the present famine in Ethiopia, why might an Ethiopian today feel like a "lone walker"? (Elicit loss of connection with family, community, humanity, and more specifics related to famine.)

SUMMARY: Contrast feelings of loneliness and hunger, using the poem where appropriate.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

. Have students make a list-poem on the board using the line "Hunger Is..." Have students contribute an ending to the line. (Examples: Hunger is weakness. Hunger is pain.)

. Imagine that you are illustrating this poem. What colors would you use? What images would you draw?

. How can we, as students in an American school, help the children in Ethiopia? (Elicit: raising funds, spreading awareness of the problem, writing to local representatives to provide governmental aid.)

HOMEWORK

. Write a letter to an Ethiopian teenager. Show him that he is not "walking alone." Letters can be addressed to: Children for Children
118-35 Queens Blvd.
Forest Hills, NY 11375

"Give a hungry man a fish and you feed him for a day;
teach him to fish and he feeds himself for a lifetime."

. Write an essay in which you explain the proverb found above. Use this explanation as a basis for making specific recommendations to alleviate the problem of famine in Ethiopia.

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Excerpt from
Oda Oak Oracle

by Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin

It is not easy, Ukutee,
To Speak
Of the gloomy path
Of a lone walker.

Loneliness is
When the ripe fruit fails
To make the bird
Aware of its existence.

Loneliness is
When the avoided heart,
Growing stale every night,
Wears a mask of bitterness,
While the tense veins
Growing frantic and mad
Scratch at the mask
Of a stricken heart.

Loneliness is
When the aged mule
Rubs its flank
Against the deserted trunk
Of a dead bush.

Loneliness is
When the moon is left cold
Among a glowing
Jungle of stars.

From "Oda Oak Oracle," republished in Three Crown Books by Oxford University Press, London.